

Viper, With All Its Records, Pushing for Supercar Status

"The new 2016 Dodge Viper ACR holds more track records than any other production car in the world."

Those words by Tim Kuniskis spelled out the primary reason

for Dodge's pride in the car as the fastest street-legal Viper track car ever.

Kuniskis, head of Passenger Car Brands - Dodge, SRT, Chrysler and Fiat for FCA North

America, added, "The SCCA has certified this fact, so now we know for a fact that it is."

"The beauty of the vehicle," said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Dan Reid, "is that it is adjustable

and the suspension can be changed to fit the environment. So it can be set for street driving and then be adjusted for track driving.

"Our customers love the fact

that this car is a track car that can be driven to the track, driven on the track all day and then be driven home on public streets,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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GM Pontiac Engineer Sets Up Shoolgirls' Science Clinic

by Jim Stickford

Cecilia Cogan had a mission. She wanted to encourage girls to go into STEM fields.

As a manufacturing engineer at GM's Powertrain Engineering Headquarters in Pontiac, Cogan set up a Nov. 5 session called WISE (Women In Science & Engineering).

The event's goal: to educate girls on the potential a career in STEM has.

WISE got its start seven years ago at GM Defiance Casting in Ohio. Cogan said that she and some of her colleagues first came up with the idea after talking with young girls in Defiance. Cogan learned that the girls didn't receive a lot of support and counseling about starting careers in STEM fields.

When Cogan moved up to Pon-

tiac Powertrain, she took the WISE idea with her. This year was the first time WISE has been held at Pontiac Powertrain.

"I'm originally from Brownsville, Texas," Cogan said. "I got my undergraduate degree from Texas A&M and my graduate degree from Kettering University."

"When I talked with girls in Defiance seven years ago, it was fair to say that there wasn't a lot of support in place to encourage girls to go into STEM fields. I made it my mission to educate girls about their options and what they could do to realize their ambitions."

The end result of Cogan and her colleagues' efforts was the WISE event. Female students from local middle schools spend



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 Female students from the Pontiac school system learn about engineering at GM's Pontiac Powertrain.

October Sales Could Be Best Since 2001

DETROIT (AP) - The U.S. is speeding toward what could be a record year for auto sales.

Sales of new cars and trucks rose by double-digit percentages at most major automakers in October, and companies are raising their expectations for the rest of the year. Ford now expects total U.S. sales of 17.4 million this year, just topping the record of 17.35 million from 2001.

General Motors' U.S. sales rose almost 16 percent over last October. Ford reported 13 percent gains. Fiat Chrysler's were up nearly 15 percent. Volkswagen, mired in an emissions-cheating scandal, posted just a small gain.

The car-buying site TrueCar.com predicted that October sales would rise 11.4 percent to 1.4 million. That would be the best October since 2001, when zero percent financing offers after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks pushed sales to 1.6 million, according to the LMC Automotive forecasting firm.

GM said sales have run at an annual rate of 17.8 million for the past six months, putting the year on track to break the annual record. And the pace likely won't slow as holiday promotions begin in November.

"It's going to be hard not to hit that record at this pace," said Jeff Schuster, senior vice president of auto sales forecasting for LMC Automotive, an industry consulting firm. Schuster said the industry roared back from weak sales in the early months of the year.

Sales have been greased by cheap financing, low gas prices and an improving economy. Schuster said buyers are using the extra cash to buy bigger vehi-



2015 Sierra Denali



2015 Ram 1500



2015 F-150

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Lincoln Sales Almost Double Luxury Car Market's Pace

by Jim Stickford

The Lincoln Motor Company is going to grow by listening to what customers in the luxury market want and then giving them vehicles that meet these demands.

That was the message given by Lincoln president Kumar Galhotra at a speech before the Automotive Press Association at the Detroit Athletic Club Nov. 3.

Galhotra said that 2014 was a "fantastic" year for Lincoln. He noted that the luxury market grew by 8 percent while Lincoln's sales grew by 14 percent.

And 2015, Galhotra said, looks to be even stronger. He noted that sales of the MKC and the MKX are strong this year, and the Lincoln Continental concept car shown at the New York Auto Show was a hit with both the automotive press and the public.

"Right now we have great product and sales momentum," Galhotra said. "Underpinning this is a very clear brand philosophy - elegance, serenity and effortless experience."

These elements all go hand in hand, Galhotra said. And Lincoln has gone about achieving these goals by doing something very simple - listening to what customers want.

"We've identified several sub-segments of luxury car buyers," Galhotra said. "There is the 'alpha' driver who wants to go from zero to 60 in three seconds. There is the customer who wants effortless power and passing experience, but really isn't concerned about horsepower."

For some customers, being



Kumar Galhotra

able to parallel park a car is a badge of honor, while others look at parallel parking as a nightmare to be avoided whenever possible, Galhotra said.

Then there are those who like aggressively designed cars and those who like quiet elegance. Creating vehicles that meet these very different tastes has required a new way of thinking.

"Whenever we talk to customers, we want to learn what their stress points are," Galhotra said. "So we try to build vehicles that eliminate stress points instead of contributing to them."

"So we produce vehicles that can self-park, and those that can weave comfortably through traffic. Vehicles that have elegant smooth designs and do things like eliminate traditional door handles."

"Think about it," Galhotra continued. "Most people don't think about a door handle or

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Lincoln President Lays Out Brand's Future Goals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

how they use it to open a car door. But what if, instead of pulling on the handle and hearing that clunky sound, you could open a door just by touching a button? There would not be any effort and you could have a door with elegant lines and no protruding handle to break up the look.

Right now, Galhotra said, Lincoln expects to sell about 100,000 vehicles in 2015. They want to get that number up to 300,000 by the end of the decade.

Currently, there are 22 Lincoln dealerships in China and the goal is to have 65 by the end of 2016.

And, Galhotra said, selling in China means adapting to local cultural norms. For example, the public has a general fear that mechanics will take advantage of them. So dealerships are designed so that customers can watch their cars being worked on. If they can't be present, they can watch the work via the Internet.

Not many people actually watch the work, Galhotra said, but having the option goes a long way to engendering trust. And for 70 percent of Chinese new-car buyers, the next car they purchase is the first car they have owned. This is opposed to most Americans who are working on their third or fourth car at the present.

With this knowledge in mind, Galhotra said, there is space reserved at Chinese Lincoln dealerships where a small ceremony that includes pulling a silk veil off the newly-purchased Lincoln is performed. People invite friends and relatives to be part of the event.

Galhotra said that because space is limited there is often a waiting list for the ceremony space. Customers have been given the option to just pick up their cars, but they've chosen to wait a couple of days until the ceremony could take place.

Galhotra said that Lincoln is going to concentrate its efforts on the U.S. and Chinese markets as well as in markets such as Mexico and Canada where the Lincoln brand is well-known. Right now, Europe is not a priority market.

So, Galhotra said, Lincoln will go forward building on its current momentum and build the brand day by day.

GM's Pontiac Powertrain Facility Hosts Girls' Science Fair

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a day at the Defiance facility. They are accompanied by "Star" students – girls in high school who have expressed an interest in STEM studies in college – as well as teachers and guides from GM. The students then are separated into three groups.

When dividing students into teams, they put students from different schools on the same team.

"That's to get the message across that in science," said Cogan, "you have to work well with others even if you don't know them."

Every year, the engineering problem reflects a particular theme, Cogan said. This year, it's safety, so students have to rig a dixie cup so that, when it's dropped from a specific height, the marshmallow it's carrying doesn't go flying out. The teams have 30 minutes to develop their solution to that engineering problem.

Cogan said that WISE students come from the local middle schools. When the project first got its start in Defiance seven years ago, it was aimed at high school students.

But, Cogan said, they found that by the time a student reached her sophomore and junior years in high school, she already had a pretty good idea of where she was going academically.

"We've found that the ideal age to talk to female students about STEM is when they are in the sixth grade," Cogan said.

"Their minds are open to the ideas and they're not too cool for school. If you want a STEM career, you have to start taking all the science courses you can in high school, so it's good to get to students before

they start their freshman year."

Cogan was joined by her friend, Mary Boyd, a quality manager at the aluminum foundry in Defiance who has worked on WISE at that facility. Boyd said she was pleased that WISE has spread beyond its place of origin in Ohio.

"I was pleased to drive up here for the day," Boyd said. "I must say I like watching what this idea is doing here. We put our heart and soul into WISE and we know what it can do to inspire children. Seeing the idea spread is very gratifying and very cool."

Anne Nitoski, a teacher at International Technical Academy (ITA) in Pontiac, said she too was very pleased to bring her students to the WISE event because she's seen firsthand just what some encouragement can do to give girls the confidence they need to study science and gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in those fields.

"While I am a social studies teacher, I have been the robotics coach at ITA for 15 years," Nitoski said. "I've seen how, with encouragement, girls can overcome their fears and really take to STEM. My daughter is on the robotics team and she loves it. I've seen what girls can do."

Cogan agreed that encouragement helps girls in deciding to look at careers in STEM. She has seen that at about the sixth grade, girls can start to lose their confidence in themselves and their abilities to do math and science. But encouraging them can help them realize that STEM is not just a "boy's thing."

"I have seen that, too," Nitoski said. "Girls are told they're weaker physically and sometimes they seem to think that makes them weaker mentally. This program is great because it gives the opportunity to see just what they



Students, from left, Raine O'Ryan, Aracely Davilan and Gabrielle Garcia work on an engineering project with Cecilia Cogan.

can do and how they can explore their options."

Becky Yang, a senior at ITA, is one of the "Star" mentors that were on hand to talk and guide the younger students at the Nov. 5 event at GM's Powertrain site.

"I plan on majoring in either mechanical engineering or computer science," Yang said. "I am

looking at attending Kettering University.

"The message I want to give the girls I've met today is something Ralph Waldo Emerson said – 'Nothing great was ever done without excitement.'"

"I want to help these girls get excited about the possibilities of science."



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Dodge is teaming with Bob Bondurant's high-performance driving school.

Bondurant to Train Buyers Of New Dodge/SRT Vehicles

High-performance cars are great fun to drive, but they're also dangerous – and Dodge would like to do something about that, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Dan Reid.

That's why Dodge is teaming up with the legendary Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving to create "The Official High Performance Driving School of Dodge/SRT."

Starting Jan. 1, 2016, Dodge customers who purchase or lease a 2015 or 2016 Dodge/SRT can experience a high-performance driving class with professional instruction and time on the track where they can develop their racing and driving skills in a one-day performance-packed adventure, Reid said.

Dodge will provide the rides – nearly 100 SRT vehicles – including the 707-horsepower Dodge Charger and Challenger SRT Hellcats.

In fact, Bondurant's entire fleet of cars is being converted to Dodge Chargers, Challengers and Vipers.

Participants who qualify will have the rare opportunity to drive the Dodge Viper ACR, the fastest street-legal Viper track car ever.

"We want drivers to develop an appreciation for the levels of performance our Dodge/SRT vehicles are capable of delivering," said Tim Kuniskis, head of Passenger Car Brands – Dodge, SRT, Chrysler, Fiat, FCA – North America.

"Teaming up with Bob Bon-

durant, whose method of training has served more than a half-million drivers from around the world for nearly half a century, gives our Dodge/SRT owners the perfect track environment and professional guidance to hone their performance driving skills.

"It also gives us the chance to expose our lineup of SRT vehicles to a new group of performance car enthusiasts."

When they arrive at the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler, Ariz., participants can combine advanced street driving skills with proven racing techniques and hours of track time for an unparalleled hands-on experience behind the wheel, Reid said.

Classes will include skid control, accident avoidance, line technique and a lead-and-follow session.

"In 47 years of being the global expert on driving instruction, I've been waiting for the right circumstances to launch the Bondurant Racing School to honor my championship legacy," said Bob Bondurant – owner of Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving.

"Finally, that day is here. "The Dodge/SRT muscle cars provide me the perfect platform needed to thoroughly teach road racing."

SRT customers have one year from their purchase or lease date to take advantage of the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving opportunity.

GM UAW Contract on Track to Ratify

DETROIT (AP) – United Auto Workers union members at General Motors appear poised, just as this newspaper was going to press, to approve a new four-year contract with the company.

Workers at two union locals at a huge factory in Lordstown, Ohio, east of Cleveland, and at an SUV assembly plant near Lansing, voted for the deal on Nov. 6.

Glenn Johnson, president of one of two locals at the sprawling Lordstown complex that makes the Chevrolet Cruze, said 72 percent of 3,000 workers at the assembly plant voted yes.

The contract passed by an 1,100-vote margin, and Johnson said he's optimistic that's enough to win approval of the national contract.

In addition, 65 percent of 1,400 workers at an adjacent parts stamping plant also voted in favor, said local President Robert Morales.

Also on Nov. 6, the contract passed with 53 percent in favor at a factory with about 3,500 workers outside of Lansing that makes the Chevrolet Traverse and other SUVs, according to the union local's website.

Voting had been fairly close earlier in the week.

Johnson said 90 percent of the workers at his local cast ballots. At the stamping plant, 87 percent voted.

If approved, the four-year contract would cover 52,600 GM factory workers.

Like a previous contract rati-

fied by Fiat Chrysler workers, GM's agreement would eliminate a two-tier wage system over eight years. GM currently pays recent hires around \$15.78 per hour.

Under the new agreement, workers with four or more years of experience will make the top \$29 hourly wage within four years; workers with less experience would make between \$22.50 and \$28 in four years and top wages in eight years.

UAW President Dennis Williams had promised – and won – richer benefits from GM, which is a bigger and wealthier company than FCA. GM reported last month that it earned \$1.36 billion in the third quarter.

Williams said lower-tier workers – who make up 20 percent of GM's hourly workforce – will now be eligible for traditional health care benefits. Both tiers of workers would get an \$8,000 signing bonus if they ratify the contract, higher than the \$3,000 and \$4,000

bonuses offered at Fiat Chrysler.

And the profit-sharing formula in GM's proposed agreement promises \$1,000 per \$1 billion of GM's North American profits. Fiat Chrysler is giving workers \$800 based on percentage gains in its North American margins.

Ford/UAW Negotiations

As this newspaper went to press, Ford Motor Company released a statement, saying, "Working with our UAW partners, we have reached a tentative agreement for the next four years..."

GM's proposed contract also offers \$60,000 for up to 4,000 eligible employees who agree to retire next spring.

Williams said lower-tier workers – who make up approximately 20 percent of GM's hourly workforce – will now be eligible for traditional health care benefits.

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Kaydan Wealth Holding Winter Coat Drive

Forty-five million Americans are currently living in poverty. For these families and individuals, a warm coat is a budget extra they simply cannot afford. Kaydan Wealth Management, Inc., invites area residents to make a difference in your neighbor's lives by donating coats and dollars during our upcoming coat drive, said Kaydan spokeswoman Danielle Howard.

Kaydan Wealth Management is working with One Warm Coat to collect clean, gently used warm coats, and dollars to support the coat drive program between Oct. 1 and Dec. 15, Howard said. Coats can be dropped off at either of Kaydan Wealth Management's two office locations:

- 329 W. Silver Lake Road, Fenton, MI 48430 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- 2701 Cambridge Court, Ste. 412, Auburn Hills, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"The process is simple," Howard said. "You drop off your extra coat(s) and Kaydan Wealth Management takes care of the rest. All donated coats will be given to a local agency for distribution to local children and adults in need."

One Warm Coat is a national nonprofit organization that works to provide a free, warm coat to any person in need, Howard said. It supports individuals, groups, companies and organizations across the country by providing the tools and resources needed to hold a successful coat drive. Coats are distributed in the communities where they were collected.

State Honors GM Efforts to Hire, Train Veterans

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency on Nov. 5 awarded its first-ever Gold-Level Veteran-Friendly Employer Certification to an automaker, recognizing General Motors for its ongoing efforts to hire and train U.S. military veterans, said GM spokesman Tom Rippering.

"The Veteran-Friendly Employer program recognizes companies committed to veteran hiring and allows former service members to identify those employers that best understand their skills and experience," MVAA Director Jeff Barnes said.

MVAA recognizes employers that commit to military veteran recruitment, training and retention practices by awarding those employers Gold, Silver and Bronze level status as Veteran-Friendly Employers. MVAA's Veteran-Friendly Employer program helps qualified organizations recruit and retain top veteran talent while providing a guide for others.

"Veterans bring a unique perspective and strong work ethic – and make us a better, stronger company," said Ken Barrett, GM chief diversity officer and a former U.S. Navy captain.

Earlier this year, GM was also the only company in the auto industry named a Best for Vets Employer by *Military Times* and a Top 100 Military Friendly Employer by *G.I. Jobs* and *Military Spouse*, Rippering said.

"We always appreciate being recognized for our efforts, but there is certainly more work to do to help transitioning vets," said Steve Hill, GM vice president, U.S. Sales and Service. "Through our national partnerships with Building for America's Bravest, Hiring Our Heroes and Shifting Gears, we hope to do even more to hire and help America's veterans."

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Buick offers a way to download books directly to its 2016 vehicles.

Drivers Can Find New Book While Keeping Eyes on Road

Thanks to modern technology, cars are a lot of things – transportation, offices, concert halls. Now, 2016 Buicks can be libraries.

Listening to a new book is easy in a Buick, thanks to OnStar 4G LTE being standard on every 2016 model, said GM spokesman Stuart Fowle. And courtesy of Audiobooks.com, downloads of two books are free through the end of next year.

Any Buick customer with an active OnStar subscription can now redeem the offer through the RemoteLink smartphone app or with the help of a live advisor, Fowle said.

The offer is part of OnStar AtYourService, a new platform that delivers something every day to drivers – from content like Audiobooks.com to location-based offers at local, regional and national retailers to hotel room booking services through priceline.com.

“Using connectivity to offer new value and services demon-

strates our innovative approach to customer service,” said Duncan Aldred, global vice president of Buick Sales, Service and Marketing.

“The features delivered through our 4G LTE connectivity platform have the potential to make every drive more productive or entertaining. This is not just technology installed just for technology’s sake.”

According to Maritz research data, Fowle said that Buick customers are 30 percent more likely to read books as a leisure activity than customers of other brands across the industry.

“Whether you are a morning commuter listening to the latest business book, a family listening to a book while driving on vacation, or a couple listening to a best seller on a weekend getaway, streaming audiobooks are a great way for drivers to discover a new favorite book while keeping their eyes on the road ahead,” said Ian Small, Audiobooks.com president and COO.

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GM Honors U.S. Veterans with Special Rebates

Beginning Nov. 3 through Jan. 4, 2016, more than 23 million veteran U.S. military personnel and their spouses can join active duty, reserved and retired service personnel in receiving the GM Military Discount on eligible Chevrolet, Buick and GMC models, said GM spokesman Tom Rippinger.

"As current and former members of our armed forces celebrate Veterans Day and the holidays with their families, we want to show our appreciation for their service," said Steve Hill, GM vice president of U.S. sales and service.

"Working with key partners like Building for America's Bravest, Hiring Our Heroes, and the Achilles Freedom Team, we hope to do even more to continue GM's 100-year legacy of commitment to the brave men and women of the U.S. military."

First offered in 2008, the GM Military Discount, Hill said, features pricing below the suggested retail price for eligible vehicles. Typically, the program is available only to active-duty, reserves, retirees and veterans and spouses within a year of discharge. The expanded program extends the discount regardless of separation date.

The GM Military Discount is one way GM continues to support the U.S. military, Hill said. Forged when its factories were transformed into the Arsenal of Democracy during World War II, GM's commitment to hiring and helping veterans, said Hill, is stronger than ever.

In 2015, GM was recognized by *G.I. Jobs*, *Military Spouse*, *Military Times* and the State of Michigan for strong support of its more than 5,000 employees who are veterans.

Batmobile Creator Barris Dies at 89 In Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (AP) - George Barris, the legendary custom car builder who created television's original Batmobile and helped define California's car culture with colorfully designed vehicles ranging from the stunningly beautiful to the simply outrageous, died Nov. 5. He was 89.

Barris, who had been in declining health, died at his Los Angeles home with his family by his side, said Edward Lozzi, his long-time publicist and friend. No cause of death was given.

Barris customized cars and buses for TV shows, movies, celebrities and heads of state and was a pioneer in designing small, plastic models of those customized cars. The models popularized his wildly imaginative vehicles all the more when they were assembled by millions of American youngsters in the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

"He was the man who started the American pastime for Baby Boomers," Lozzi said.

For decades, Barris worked out of a shop in a modest North Hollywood neighborhood, just down the street from Universal Studios. Passers-by would often be startled to see the Batmobile or another stunning vehicle sitting inside the shop and to meet Barris if they strolled in to check it out.

Barris also worked on The Munster Koach for the 1960s TV show, "The Munsters," and "Black Beauty," the car Bruce Lee used in the TV show, "The Green Hornet."

He also customized cars for numerous well-heeled private collectors, Lozzi said, as well as buses for traveling rock musicians.

October Sales Best in Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cles loaded with features. Sales of the eight-seat Cadillac Escalade, for example, rose 47 percent.

Automakers induced buyers further by offering incentives on outgoing 2015 models. TrueCar said the car companies spent 14.1 percent more than last October on cash-back promotions and other deals. Chevrolet was offering zero-percent financing for up to 72 months on a 2015 Camaro, while Toyota advertised \$2,000 cash back on a 2015 Avalon sedan.

The deals are expected to continue. On Nov. 3, Ford said it will offer no-haggle prices below the standard retail price on most vehicles through the end of this year. The discounts vary, but on a 2016 Ford Explorer, the starting price drops by \$1,121 to \$29,929.

Whether Ford's rivals will follow remains to be seen. Incentive spending usually declines in November and picks up again in December, but Mark LaNeve, Ford's U.S. marketing chief, said he's already seeing Black Friday car deals advertised on television.

"We're in a strong market, but it's a very competitive market with a lot of activity out there," he said.

LaNeve reassured investors that Ford won't spend more on incentives than it did in October, but will simply shift the money around.

Industry analysts worry that, as U.S. sales peak and eventually slow, automakers will fall into the trap they did a decade ago, resorting to heavy discounting in order to keep growing their sales. That lowered industry profits and slashed cars' resale values.

Fiat Chrysler reported sales of about 196,000, led by the booming Jeep brand with a 33 percent increase. Sales were just over 170,000 a year ago.

Pickup truck sales also helped

Fiat Chrysler sales grow. The company sold almost 41,000 Rams, a 3 percent gain over a year ago for FCA's top-selling vehicle.

Eric Lyman, TrueCar's vice president of industry analysis, says pent-up demand from the recession should peter out in the middle of 2016. After that, automakers could face a period of declining sales. Deals popping up over the next few months are one hedge against that.

"This is probably the first we're seeing automakers react to a possible decline in future demand," Lyman said.

Volkswagen offered \$2,000 to its customers last month to blunt the impact of its diesel emissions scandal, but the Volkswagen brand sold just 74 more cars in October than it did a year ago. VW's other brands, Audi and Porsche, saw little impact because the scandal mostly affected four-cylinder diesels in Volkswagens. Audi sales rose 17 percent in October.

That could change. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Nov. 2 accused VW of cheating on six-cylinder Audi and Porsche models, a charge VW denies.

Among other automakers that reported Nov. 3:

- GM sold almost 263,000 vehicles last month, led by a 10 percent increase in sales of the Chevrolet Silverado pickup to nearly 52,000. Sales of the Chevrolet brand rose almost 18 percent for its best October in 11 years.

- Ford's sales jumped to nearly 214,000. The recently updated Edge SUV saw big gains, while sales of the sporty Mustang more than doubled. Ford's biggest seller, the F-Series pickup, rose 3 percent to 65,500.

- Fiat Chrysler saw its strongest October since 2001 with sales of about 196,000, led by Jeep's 33 percent increase.

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Dodge Viper – Street Legal and Track Ready

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Reid said. "People don't have to haul this Viper to the track on a trailer."

Still, Reid said, the Dodge/SRT team wanted validation that the new Viper ACR is indisputably "the ultimate street-legal race car." So, beginning in October 2014, when development was in high gear, the new 2016 Dodge Viper ACR started its resetting of the record books by recording never-seen-before lap times at 13 tracks across the country, including world-famous Laguna Seca, Road Atlanta and Virginia International Raceway.

Dodge tapped its own SRT vehicle dynamics and development engineer Chris Winkler, aka "The Wolf," to take the wheel of the ACR and he delivered, setting 11 of the 2016 Viper ACR's 13 track records, Reid said. Winkler is an accomplished SCCA champion who has more than 20 years of racing experience.

For the past seven years, he has led the dynamic development of the Dodge Viper, putting his extensive talent to work in developing the car.

For consistency, at the historic Laguna Seca Raceway in Monterey, Dodge teamed with champion racecar driver Randy Pobst, who owns dozens of Laguna Raceway track records, Reid said.

The result: Pobst ran the 2016 Dodge Viper ACR at Laguna to a new track record of 1:28.65. That record-setting time is 5.27 seconds faster than the previous-generation ACR's track record at Laguna and 1.24 seconds faster than his previous Laguna track record in the Porsche 918 Spyder (1:28.65 vs 1:29.89). That's the equivalent of 11 car lengths after just one lap at Laguna Seca.

Certified for public roads and

engineered to wring every last hundredth of a second out of road course lap times, the 2016 Dodge Viper ACR, Reid said, combines the latest in aerodynamic, braking and tire technology.

The SRT engineering team that developed the 2016 Dodge Viper ACR, Reid said, is "well-stocked" with members who race their own cars, as well as learning from the factory-based racing Viper GTS-R that competed in the American Le Mans Series and IMSA United SportsCar Championship from 2012-2014, capturing the GTLM class driver and team championships in 2014.

For the new Viper ACR, the team focused its efforts on three areas: aerodynamics, chassis and tires to maximize grip, producing never-seen-before handling capabilities and unprecedented lap times.

The original Dodge Viper ACR was produced for the 1999 model year and was based off of the second-generation Viper coupe, Reid said.

This model had suspension and engine enhancements focused on maximizing performance in road racing and auto-cross environments.

Horsepower was bumped from 450 to 460 horsepower via a unique air filter and smooth air intake hoses. Curb weight was reduced by more than 50 pounds by stripping the audio system and removing other non-essential items, such as the fog lamps.

The new stiffer, adjustable suspension removed another 14 pounds of weight from the vehicle. This model also had an "ACR" badge and 20-spoke BBS wheels.

In late 2009, Dodge announced the non-street-legal Viper ACR-X, targeted at the grassroots racer, Reid said.

Combining the best perform-

ance attributes of the record-setting, street-legal Dodge Viper ACR and the safety equipment of championship-winning Viper Competition Coupe, Dodge produced the non-street-legal racer that made its on-track debut in the summer of 2010 as part of Dodge Viper Cup spec racing series.

The 2010 Dodge Viper ACR-X was also powered by a 8.4-liter V-10, equipped with factory-installed headers, forged pistons and a low-restriction exhaust system that produced 640 horsepower (40 more than the production model).

The suspension also was tuned and upgraded specifically for on-track usage, while the weight was lightened by a full 160 pounds (versus the standard production Viper) to take on even the most challenging road course. Additional aerodynamic upgrades improved downforce, while enhancing stability and significantly improving grip in high-speed cornering.

Similar to the Dodge Viper Competition Coupe, the Viper



Tim Kuniskis introduces two 2016 Dodge Viper ACRs at the 2015 SEMA.

ACR-X contained factory-installed safety equipment, such as a factory-designed roll cage, fuel cell as well as a race seat, Reid said.

Having a track car like the Viper ACR makes sense, Reid said, because there are more and more private tracks around the country where people can let their high-performance vehicles really go.

"The country club environment for the recreational racer is

becoming more popular," Reid said. "And by developing technology for the Viper ACR, we are able to show that it works and is proven on the track every day by Viper drivers. That helps the technology migrate to other vehicles and give drivers assurances that it works."

Viper has just started production on the Viper ACR. The vehicle should be reaching public showrooms in the weeks to come, Reid said.

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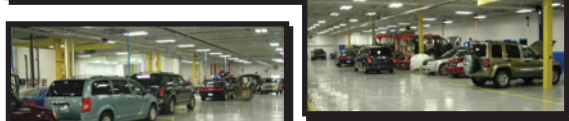
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